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COMMON BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEARNING DISABLED ADOLESCENT

by

Robert T. Price

A RESEARCH PAPER
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		Page
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Limitations Summary	
2	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
	Identification Definitions Characteristics Summary	
3	SUMMARY	22
REFERENCE NOTES		27
REFERENCES		29

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Learning Disabled students poses certain psychological obstacles. The more knowledge of psychology the individual teacher has in approaching students, the more effective teacher one will be. One of the very instrumental factors in good teaching is to create receptivity among the students. The better one can do that, the better teacher one will be. The less receptivity taking place, the harder the teaching is going to be and there is going to be less teaching. Therefore, the more one understands some of the common behavioral characteristics of Learning Disabled students, the more effective job of teaching one will be able to do. The purpose of this paper was to examine some common behavioral characteristics of Learning Disabled students.

These adolescent years are formative years for our students. They are in the throes of great physical and sexual changes--their behaviors change almost from day to day. It is an age in which there is a great deal of testing and experimentation taking place; they are testing their parents and their parents' values, their teachers,

religious beliefs, the authorities in the community, their own peers, and to some extent, the entire social structure of our society.

A more meaningful life for our students would be attained if one would help implement warmer human relationships and more opportunities for honest self-expression without fear of penality.

The problem researched in this paper was what are some effective ways of handling some common behavioral characteristics of Learning Disabled students?

Questions approached in the research of this topic were:

1. How does self-esteem affect student behavior?
2. How does impulsivity affect student behavior?
3. How does hyperactivity affect student behavior?
4. How does distractibility affect student behavior?
5. How can student behaviors be changed within the classroom?

The major review of the literature concentrated on studies within the above areas since 1968.

Limitations

In presenting the research data in this paper, it was hoped the professional personnel involved in the educational planning and programming for Learning Disabled adolescents would gain a clearer perspective of how

difficult diagnosis really is. It is evident that many of our L.D. adolescents present a multiplicity of identified behavioral characteristics.

To properly clarify the problem of behavioral characteristics, knowledge of the terminology was essential and useful. The following characteristics have been acknowledged as applicable to the consideration of an L.D. individual of any age. Yet the observer intent upon identifying some characteristics of the L.D. adolescents will not see the same manifestations as would have been seen in the same individual at an earlier age. Some of the particularly noteworthy differences between the former and the latter are as follows:

Self-esteem--The L.D. adolescent student lacks adequate self-esteem. Who am I? Where do I belong in this world? This inferiority complex can be attributed to a constant frustration caused by an inability to achieve even the simplest of tasks; ostracization/rejection by peer groups may set in. Another aspect of this problem that shows up very clearly in the classroom is the great fear and sensitivity to failure. These adolescents are extremely sensitive to failure. They just could not take it and so very often they organized their lives around avoiding activities which might potentially have ended in failure.

Impulsivity--The L.D. adolescent had developed some ability to delay responses in an appropriate manner. They continued to over-react to stimuli, which commonly was

noted in the hardest pencil tapper, the uncontrolled whistler, and the one with the loudest laugh. Parents were most concerned with this unpredictable behavior. More was at stake now when their child started driving, dating and working. How much restraint would be managed without producing anger and rebellion (Wilcox, 1970)?

Distractibility--Fortunately, the attention span of the L.D. child lengthened with maturity. Unfortunately, it was insufficient for the high school lecture periods. These young people now divided into two groups: the "goof-offs" (couldn't pay attention and distracted others) and the "anxiety-ridden students" (who froze and could not concentrate too long on a given subject) (Wilcox, 1970).

Behavioral Changes within the Classroom--Behavioral change techniques were constantly being introduced, modified, and evaluated as to usefulness within the classroom. We assumed most behavior was learned, both desirable and undesirable. Students who had learned inappropriate ways of coping with their problems could also learn to substitute more desirable behaviors. The proper dissimination of new ideas within the behavioral areas of psychology and education could be taught by properly trained educators.

Summary

In summary, the purpose of this paper was to examine some behavioral characteristics of the Learning Disabled

adolescent. In reviewing the research, the author has attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How does self-esteem affect student behavior?
2. How does impulsivity affect student behavior?
3. How does hyperactivity affect student behavior?
4. How does distractibility affect student behavior?
5. How can student behaviors be changed within the classroom?

The purpose of this paper was to examine some common behavioral characteristics of the Learning Disabled adolescent. Chapter 2 will review the literature that concentrated on some behavior characteristics for Learning Disabled adolescents since 1968. Chapter 3 will bring together and discuss ideas and concepts of Chapter 1 and 2. Finally, some thoughts and opinions on the future of the Learning Disabled adolescent will also be shared with the readers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Identification

In spite of average intelligence, the adolescent with a learning disability had different academic needs than other students and possibly added personal complications within his life. Therefore, it was important to explore different methods of handling and instructing him. "High school content-area teachers were not usually sensitized to learning-disabled students. Their chief concern was their subject of specialization" (Lerner, 1977). Consequently, the role of the learning disabilities specialist at the secondary level may be multiple in scope.

The L.D. Specialist must be able to work with the regular education staff, be able to explain the student's problems, and be able to communicate to the regular staff, the need to make certain modifications within their curriculum.

Chances are that if personalized attention was not given these students, they would become "dropouts" from secondary education. Of the approximately 750,000 adolescents who drop out of school each year, it is

estimated that one-third end up on relief rolls or in institutions (Anderson, 1970). Although all of the students were not identified learning disabled, it was likely that a certain proportion of them were. It was essential that with our ever-increasing knowledge of how students learn, educators must turn around this disturbing "dropout" potential.

In order to properly attempt to work with these students, it was imperative to learn to adapt to different styles of learning. The less than adequate performer in one or two academic areas may be an excellent student in other areas. Another major problem that exists is the student who is regarded by his teachers and peer groups as the "behavior problem." Most professionals who work with behavior-disordered student or students with learning disabilities agreed that considerable overlay exists between the two conditions (Clarizio& McCoy, 1976).

Definitions

By definitions, children with specific learning disabilities have control processing dysfunctions which interfere directly with certain types of learning. On the other hand, children with behavior disorders may or may not have central processing dysfunctions, and it is not necessarily a fact that the dysfunctions are related to the learning problem (Wright, 1974).

Another definition in the field of learning disabilities is that of Kirk. His definition goes somewhat further:

> A learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing, or arithematic resulting from a possible cerebral dysfunction and not from mental retardation, sensory deprivation, cultural or instructional factors. (Kirk, 1962)

Bateman perceived being learning disabled as:

> Children who have learning disorders are those who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between their estimated intellectual potential and the actual level of performance related to basic disorders in the learning processes which may or may not be accompanied by demonstrable central nervous system dysfunction, and which are not secondary to generalized disturbance or sensory loss. (Bateman, 1965)

Clements perceived being learning disabled as:

> near average, average, or above average general intelligence, with certain learning or behavioral disabilities . . . which are associated with deviation of function of the central nervous system. These deviations may manifest themselves by various combinations of impairment in perception, conceptualization, language, meaning, and control of attention, impulse, or more of functioning. (Clements, Note 2)

An updated reference was the definition given by Kirk.

His definition states:

> A learning disability is a psychological or neurological impediment to the development of adequate perceptual or, communicative behavior which, first, is manifested in discrepancies among specific behaviors, or between overall performance and academic achievement; second, it is not primarily due to severe mental retardation, sensory handicaps, emotional problems, or lack of opportunity to learn; and third, it requires instructional procedures over and above those which can be offered in the regular classroom. (Kirk, 1978)

Although definitions of learning disabilities are helpful in the early screening of learning disabled candidates, there still remains special critical problems in properly identifying these children at the secondary level.

Characteristics

The learning disabled student was often a victim of low self-esteem encompassing a giving up and what-difference-does-it make attitude. The child's sense of unfitness increased as school requirements pyramided. The demands made on the learning disabled adolescent conflicted with the youngster's picture of himself as helpless. He did not know how to get and keep warm protective relationships. He was easily led. He quickly came to know his place in school as Dr. Thomas Minter phrases it:

> His basic ego is cracking wide open. By the age of twelve or fourteen, the average child should have a feeling of industry. He should begin to think that there is something worthwhile to aim for and that he has the basic tools to work toward meaningful objectives. It is a sense of himself as somebody who can do, who can accomplish, who is, in fact, a person. The ego of a child is essentially the core of his psychological make-up. It is the mechanism that controls the child's impulses and drives. It directs the expression of these impulses to conform with the requirements of his environment and his society. If a child has a strong ego, he is better able to cope with stress. He finds the world less well organized for him, more confusing, more unsettling.
>
> His ego must find ways to mediate effectively between his impulses and desires and the pressures exerted by his environment. To survive, he must find some way--some defense mechanism. He makes the best deal he can. (Minter, Note 4)

This brings us to the classroom and class placement. Class placement itself had a direct bearing upon the self-concept of the learning disabled student. In general, the choice was between the special or the regular classroom, although no given educational setting was either "good" or "bad" per se. It depended in part on the intent, the attitude, and the collective content of those educators charged with decision making. The key, of course, was to individualize instruction, provide support when needed, and above all, continually help the learning disabled adolescents self-esteem by affording him the sensitivity, respect, and dignity he both needs and deserves. (McCall, Note 3).

A characteristic that not only was a deterrent to the learning disabled student but also to those around him was found in his inability to control his reactions at times within the classroom. He appeared to be over excitable and unpredictable. This generally described his impulsivity.

Children with learning disabilities were found to be impulsive when impulsivity was defined as the opposite of reflectivity. This indicated weaknesses in the scanning aspect of attention. Another description of the characteristic would infer that he was highly impulsive at times and had difficulty in keeping his hands off objects and people. He spoke without checking himself and may even have said insulting things without realizing it (Rodman, 1973).

Also in the area of impulsivity we found the overlapping of symptoms in learning disabled and behaviorally disabled adolescents. In the diagnosis it was important to make a distinction between the impulsive and disinhibited behavior exhibited by some children with learning disabilities and the acting-out and aggressive behavior sometimes exhibited by children with behavioral problems. The value of the differential diagnosis lies in the assignment of remedial measures (McCarthy, 1969).

Frostig, in her writings, conceived the treatment of learning disturbances as a four-fold task, one of which involves amelioration of global and pervasive disturbances, such as impulsivity, principally through using techniques of classroom management and aiding the childs' social adjustment and emotional development (Frostig, 1964).

As the learning disabled adolescent's world became more perceptively organized, it became easier for him to accept and respond to situations more appropriately. Classroom activities should be designed to use up excess energy and to provide an outlet for those compulsive activities over which the individual exercises limited control. Routines and habituations of the individual should be so structured that the compulsive energies find expression at the time and in these situations, problems are held to a minimum (Shields, 1966).

Especially crucial for learning disability teachers were findings that suggested modeling, instructions, and extra motivation combined may be effective in modifying impulsivity (Bower, Note 1). Having a reflective tempo, calling attention to exactly how one uses scanning strategy, and providing favorable consequence for improved performances are techniques used successfully in classroom settings. Other useful teaching methods include self-instruction, response cost, time-out, self-control curriculum, and life span interview (Epstein, 1975). If the above techniques or various combinations of techniques are properly utilized they should help the learning disabled adolescent more effectively cope with classroom situations.

In the area of hyperactivity, the learning disabled adolescents appear in constant motion;--flitting, restless, fidgety "Driveness" manifesting itself also in inhibited speech, disorganized thinking, even in absence of outward hyperkinesis (Clements, 1967).

Research study by Dr. Mark A. Steward in the St. Louis area, strongly suggests that hyperactivity has a psychological cause, and that the child may develop personality disorders which are secondary to his basic problem. Another goal of that study was to verify the observations of physicians that most hyperactive children grew out of their restless activities around twelve years of age (Signor, 1967). A study by Menkes, (1967), however, found that many of his patients reported persistent feelings of restlessness which lasted up to the age of thirty (pp. 393-399).

At this time no one really knows why children become hyperactive. Because hyperactivity involves a cluster of related characteristics, many control techniques are designed to manage more than a high level of motor activity. These techniques include medication, behavior modification, structured environment, self-instruction, modeling and biofeedback (Kauffman, 1977).

The learning disabled student often lacked motivation for doing anything. This was especially true at the junior and senior high school. The L.D. student was usually unable to concentrate on one thing for any length of time. He lost interest in abstract material. He had a tendency to become locked in simple repetitious motor activity or pre-occupation with one verbal topic (Clements, 1967).

In observing the behavior of a suspected learning disabled student, the regular classroom teacher should be aware of the distractability the student displays. The child's attention cannot remain focused. He appears to be at the mercy of every passing stimulus, even ones that would go unnoticed as usual background phenomena by normal children, such as the resetting of the blinds or the sight of the teacher's wristwatch (Van Witson, 1968).

Often these children have developed the capacity to focus attention for short periods of time but cannot sustain it. They stop listening in class, perhaps to daydream or perhaps simply because their mechanism shuts off--they have had enough. After a rest period they will be

ready to go again. But right at this time they cannot take in or process anymore. This is a handicap to the student both in group instruction and in independent work as well.

To initiate acceptable behavior, classroom materials should be made available having a clear, specific purpose to engage the students' attention. He should be assigned a single task of short duration and the material put away immediately after use (Van Witson, 1968).

Perhaps the best know educational methods for distractible students are those refined by Cruickshank (1975).

The distractible child exists and for whatever reason, he is fundamentally attracted to stimuli--visual, auditory, tactile, and probably others. We postulate that, if this is so, the response of the adult should be to reduce stimuli for as long a period of time as may be required for the child to learn appropriate attending behavior and to establish integrated perceptual-motor responses.

In order to minimize distracting stimuli in the classroom, Cruickshank recommends such measures as the following:

1. Sound treating the walls and ceilings
2. Carpeting the floors
3. Covering the windows with translucent material
4. Clear directions
5. Firm expectations
6. Predictable routine
7. Be consistent in your approach (Cruickshank, 1975, pp. 253-254)

At times, a heavy barrage of criticism has been directed at Cruickshank's ideas (Sroefe, 1975). At this time, however, the literature appears to support only two tentative conclusions regarding reduced environment stimuli; attending to task may be increased but higher cognitive tasks and academic achievement will probably be unaffected by attenuating normal classroom distractions (Kaufmann, 1977).

In their classroom relations with learning disabled adolescents, L.D. teachers must initiate firmness, fairness and friendliness. Firmness does not imply rigid domination of adolescents and authoritarianism will have a tendency to breed resentment (Howard, 1972).

The L. D. teacher must also be scrupulously fair and courteous, especially if he expects similar treatment. The teacher who made wisecracks or was flip or arrogant, may expect the same from his students.

The L. D. teacher must also demonstrate friendliness by being understanding, tolerant, and sincere with students. However, efforts by a teacher to be one of the gang are seldom, if ever, successful and often prevent development of an atmosphere of mutual respect that is conducive to a good positive learning experience (Howard, 1972).

Therefore, the challenge of today is to educate our children to freedom with order, without resorting to outdated and ineffective autocratic methods of demanding, punishing, or rewarding. The big question is, how can we

inculcate in our children and youth the values we most cherish; how can we create order in our classrooms so that the students can learn what is essential to be learned if they are going to function successfully in our highly technical and changing world?

Krumboltz and Krumboltz (1972) recommended thirteen behavioral principles from various operant behavioral schools of psychology that have been proven effective and practical in their approach on adolescent behaviors within the classroom:

To strengthen new behavior

1. Positive Reinforcement Principle: To Improve or increase a child's performance of a certain activity, arrange for an immediate reward after each correct performance.

To develop new behavior

2. Successive Approximations Principle: To teach a child to act in a manner in which he has seldom or never before behaved, reward successive steps to the final behavior.
3. Modeling Principle: To teach a child a new way of behaving, allow him to observe a prestigeful person performing the desired behavior.
4. Cueing Principle: To teach a child to remember to act at a specific time, arrange for him to receive a cue from the correct performance just before the action is expected rather than after he has performed incorrectly.
5. Discrimination Principle: To teach a child to act in a particular way under one set of circumstances but not another, help him to identify the cues that differentiate the circumstances and reward him only when his action is appropriate to the cue.

To maintain new behavior

6. Substitution Principle: To reinforce a child with a previously ineffective reward, present it just before (or assoon as possible to) the time you present the more effective reward.

7. Intermittent Reinforcement Principle: To encourage a child to continue performing an established behavior with few or no rewards, gradually and intermittently decrease the frequency with which the correct behavior is rewarded.

To stop inappropriate behavior you may choose from four alternative principles

8. Satiation Principle: To stop a child from acting in a particular way, you may allow him to continue (or insist that he continue) performing the undesired act until he tires of it.
9. Extinction Principle: To stop a child from acting in a particular way, you may arrange conditions so that he receives no rewards following the undesired act.
10. Incompatible Alternative Principle: To stop a child from acting in a particular way, you may reward an alternative action that is inconsistent with or cannot be performed at the same time as the undesired act.
11. Negative Reinforcement Principle: To stop a child from acting in a particular way, you may arrange for him to terminate a mild aversive situation immediately by improving his behavior.

To modify emotional behavior

12. Avoidance Principle: To teach a child to avoid a certain type of situation, simultaneously present to the child the situation to be avoided (or some representation of it) and some aversive condition (or its representation).
13. Fear Reduction Principle: To help a child overcome his fear of a particular situation, gradually increase his exposure to the feared situation while he is otherwise comfortable, relaxed, secure or rewarded. (Krumboltz & Krumboltz, 1972, pp. 232-233)

In contrast to the operant school of psychology which has its emphasis on various behavior modification techniques, the humanistic school of psychology as exemplified by author/educator Rudolf Dreikurs approached the handling

of behavioral problems on two interrelated levels. On one level, he outlined a completely democratic approach for the classroom and school that substituted natural and logical consequences for the outdated methods of reward and punishment. That approach was aimed to train students in participatory decision-making and problem-solving through class councils and to show teachers how to function as democratic leaders rather than autocratic dispensers of rules and demands. On another more fundamental level, Dreikurs presented to teachers a comprehensible and practical system for understanding and correcting misbehavior that could be readily learned and immediately put to work in the classroom setting.

In Dreikurs' system, misbehaving and distrubing children were discouraged, they have lost the courage to cope with the demands of the family or school situation in a useful, acceptable way. The child did not give up a basic goal of finding and belonging, but instead, switched to useless behaviors that were disturbing to others to accomplish his goal. Instead of finding a place through contribution, the child wanted to get attention and service from others in order to be sure that he still counted (Dreikurs, 1971).

Dreikurs was convinced that every form of misbehavior in pre-adolescence to adulthood can be ascribed to one of his four goals of misbehavior--attention getting, power, revenge and displays of inadequacy.

The great importance of defining these four goals of misbehavior was that each goal be recognized by the effect it has on others, and especially the impulsive reaction it created in adults. Whatever the teacher was inclined to do when a child misbehaves was generally identical with the child's expectation. The reaction of the teacher to the child's provoking actions offers a definitive clue to determining which mistaken goal the child was pursuing. Thus, for the adult:

> goal one--attention getting--generates a feeling of annoyance; goal two--power--generates anger and feeling defeated; goal three--revenge--generates feelings of deep hurt; goal four--display of inadequacy--generates a feeling of hopelessness (Dreikurs, 1971).

The child's reaction to the teacher's efforts to correct misbehavior offers another clue for determining which mistaken goal was operating. When the teacher admonishes a child to stop a certain misbehavior, if the child's goal was attention, he will cease the behavior although it will probably resume again before long. If the child's goal was power, he will refuse to stop the disturbance or may actually increase it. If his goal was revenge, he will switch to some more violent reaction. If the goal was inadequacy, the child will do nothing, but will remain passive. Because many typical misbehaviors, laziness, underachievement, fidgiting, lying, etc., can be

an expression of any one of the four goals, knowing which goal was operating at a given time provides immediate insight into the seriousness of the misbehavior and indicates how to deal with it.

In order to change the child's mistaken goal, the teacher must stop reinforcing the mistaken goal by reacting impulsively to the misbehavior as the child expects. For the child who seeks attention, Dreikurs recommended avoiding giving attention when the child makes an undue bid for it. Instead he recommended giving recognition when the child behaves cooperatively and usefully. For the child who seeks power, Dreikurs recommended avoiding fighting the child by refusing to engage in a power struggle, by taking "your sails out of his wind." Recognize that the child has power and enlist his help and cooperation. If the child was operating on goal three, revenge; Dreikurs said avoid punishment and refuse to feel hurt. Instead try to win the child and convince him by word and deed that he was liked. When the child displays goal four, inadequacy, Dreikurs maintained that it was essential that you not become discouraged yourself. Give lots of encouragement and show faith in the child (Dreikurs, 1971).

While Dreikurs' four goals are observable at all ages, during adolescence many others lend themselves as a means to find a place in the peer group. In order to understand youth, one can no longer rely on the four goals exclusively.

All school personnel have to become familiar with the students private logic so they can be more emphatic and sensitive to the total students needs (Dreikurs, 1971).

Dreikurs' insight and practical ideas for teachers developed from the coherent system of psychology originated by Adler (Wolman, 1965). It was this author's opinion that Adler's contributions have long been overshadowed by the enormous impact of Freudian psychoanalysis in this country. Few persons have recognized that the Adlerian concept of human nature was especially appropriate to the goals and requirements of a democratic society. The Adlerian model, and Dreikurs' adaptation of its principles to education, with its basic assumption that human beings are social, purposive in their behavior, and self-determining in all their actions, fits the democratic requirement for freedom of choice, decision-making, and social responsibility for our young learning disabled adolescents.

Summary

These four specific characteristics and how student behaviors may be altered within the classroom are very often mentioned by teachers who work in the field of the learning disabled adolescent. They were herein defined and described in hope that this information will help sensitize the reader to some of the neurological and behavioral handicaps exhibited by the learning disabled adolescent.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this paper the writer has attempted to cover some recent research and trends concerning some behavioral characteristics of the learning disabled adolescent. The learning disabled adolescent has for too long been neglected and is in need of continued attention.

The learning disabled adolescent who is intellectually capable, but who nonetheless is still struggling with various academic skills cannot be ignored. He represents an educational frontier, which must receive coordinated, vigorous action.

Just as the healthy adolescent must learn to express his feelings, he needs to exercise his growing intellectual abilities and skills. This is difficult for some learning-disabled adolescents to accomplish, because their disabilities may have excluded them from remaining in an academic stream that challenges them intellectually; or by not being allowed to acquire learning and express themselves through their intact modalities, they may have been denied opportunities to be challenged intellectually.

It is therefore, the hope of this writer that the ideas and literature presented in Chapters 1 and 2 will

help the learning disability teacher apply some of those trends and research to the learning disabled adolescent within the classroom.

The learning disability teacher must possess flexibility when working with learning disabled students so they can achieve near their potential. Without support and understanding they can go down to defeat quickly. The teacher must build on their strengths and lend them continued support in their areas of difficulty. Although there are no concrete rules, most teachers believe true individualization will be the answer for all students--and especially for those with specific learning disabilities. If the learning disabilities teacher plans carefully with the regular classroom teacher, the learning disabled student will be prepared with the necessary survival skills to receive, integrate, and retrieve relevant information from the regular curriculum (Alley, 1977).

Although continued research is needed, the learning disability teacher may want to examine and possibly apply the following suggestions to the classroom situations as summarized by Hewett (1968):

1. Provide opportunities for success and reduce failure-producing situations. When failure occurs, place it in its proper perspective, thus reducing damage to students' egos and helping to eliminate the "failure syndrome." Back up to the easier level to ensure success. Assume responsibility for giving too hard an assignment if appropriate.

2. Elimination of grades may be necessary. For some students this is not advisable, but when grades place too much stress on a student, they should be removed and other goals provided.

3. Provide attention to the student when he needs it. If the teacher is unable to do this, use a stand-by program or assign a "buddy" to the student to provide the necessary attention.

4. Provide phsycial outlets for the student having difficulty with impulse-control. A punching bag in the corner of the room or gym, or a mat for wrestling, can be utilized to let students work off excess frustrations.

5. For the hyperactive student, "breaks" should be provided to allow him to get out of his seat. This may mean assigning errands for him to do where he can move about or leave the room.

6. Provide a quiet, removed study environment when necessary. This may be done through the use of study carrels or screens or by moving a desk to a quiet corner of the room or into the hall or an empty classroom. Hewett (1968), advocated uses of centers within the room. Among the centers are study booths. He states: "The first intervention involves sending the child to work on an assigned mastery task in one of the study booths or 'offices' . . . . booths and presented . . . in a positive manner and as a result they are desirable working areas . . . merely allowing the child to change position and move around in the room often appears to interrupt effectively a period of boredom or resistance."

7. For the distractible student, heighten the vividness of the classwork, present limited assignments and put emphasis on concrete material rather than abstract material . . . this increases the probability of the learning disabled child doing something . . . in learning. (Hewitt, 1968, p. 135)

Another area of importance relative to the learning disabled student is that of the teacher. The teacher must provide the model for expected conduct and behavior. The teacher who relies on sarcasm or criticism as instructional techniques has no place in the classroom with learning

disabled children. These methods are too destructive and too easily misunderstood by the child with any neurological dysfunction, and may cause more stress and regression in the child. The following suggestions by Bailey (1975) should help the teacher improve his consistency in dealing with learning disabled students:

1. Be open yet consistent insofar as possible. Good manners and consideration are important.
2. Take a positive, rather than negative, approach to behavior control. Calling attention to inappropriate behavior often reinforces it and adds to the failure syndrome already established. Rather than criticize the action, demonstrate the desired action. Students who see patience demonstrated in a teacher are more likely to learn patience than those whose teacher impatiently calls out "Be patient--wait a minute--hold on."
3. Do not be afraid to "invest" of yourself. By presenting an air of expectancy of proper behavior, a teacher often elicits the desired results. Even the student who has not previously produced, when treated as if results are expected and the goal is within his reach, will be most likely to react in the desired manner. This places the teacher in the position of being wrong when the student does not produce. For this reason, many teachers would rather be right; and expecting the nothing and letting the student know that the teacher feels the student will respond in an inappropriate manner, the student reacts as expected. Although this type of teacher lost nothing, nothing was really invested. Investment involves risk and many teachers are afraid that the stakes are too high if they are put in a position of being wrong.
4. The teacher must convey respect for the student while, at the same time, conveying respect for the classroom situation itself and for learning. The teacher who respects learning, teaches students that same respect if he does not assume that the student is incapable of attaining that same philosophy. (Bailey, 1975, pp. 224-225)

Within the areas of classroom behavior, research has shown that no one method will result in solving classroom discipline problems. It seems that both operant conditioning and the humanistic school of psychology approaches have merit. Each approach is essentially concerned with helping learning disabled adolescents overcome behaviors which interfere with personal productivity and learning. As such, both techniques offer alternatives for application to individual difficulties. A knowledge of each approach will help the teacher decide the most appropriate technique for individual children within a class.

The future trends and research that have been indicated, if pursued, should help to bring about a more useful human being in the true sense of the word; with self-esteem; confidence; ability to interact; ability to plan ahead; awareness of his shortcomings; but also willingness to persevere; and with optimism about his future. We must foster this with continued dashes of encouragement and the opportunity for successes. The keywords are change and hope.

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